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SUBJECT: NEPAL: NO ELECTION IN TERAJ ABSENT PROGRESS  
ON MADHESI ISSUES

#### Summary

1. (U) Local political leaders and officials in Danusha District, in the central Terai, opined to Emboffs December 4-5 that without first addressing Madhesi issues of inclusiveness and federalism, holding the Constituent Assembly election would not be possible in the Terai. Despite reinstating more than 900 police posts after the peace accord in November 2006, the Government of Nepal has failed to maintain peace and security in the rural areas. Extortion and abductions are rampant and have forced Village Development Committee (VDC) Secretaries to abandon their VDCs and shift to the district capital of Jankapur. This has negatively affected development activities in the district.

#### Madhesi Issues Linked with Constituent Assembly Election

2. (SBU) Local Madhesi leaders representing the four major political parties in Danusha District in central Terai told Emboffs December 5 that without first addressing the Madhesi issues of inclusiveness and federalism, it would be impossible to hold a Constituent Assembly (CA) election in the Terai. The leaders -- who were from the Nepali Congress (NC), the Communist Party of Nepal -- United Marxist Leninist (UML), the Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Ananda Devi) (NSP-A), and the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF) -- claimed that Pahadi ("hilly people") elites in Kathmandu had suppressed and alienated Madhesis for centuries. It was now incumbent on the Interim Government and the Six-Party Alliance to devise a policy to include Madhesis in all government agencies. Satrugan Mahato, District Secretary (i.e., president-equivalent) for the UML, stated that, while the 1990 People's Movement had given the Madhesis political rights, they were still waiting for social, cultural and economic rights. The failure by the Government of Nepal (GON) to include Madhesis in the policy process had embittered the population and made Madhesis easy

prey for demagogues and extremists who were intent on blocking the CA election. Mahato further claimed that, except for the UML, no other political party was prepared to face an election. Ram Saroj Yadav, NC District President, Party, countered that none of the national political parties truly supported holding an election, at least not in the Terai. If they did, they would have reached out to the Madhesis. Rabindra Thakur, district in-charge for the MPRF, stressed that until the GON implemented its agreement from August with the MPRF, it would be impossible to hold the election. Thakur also discussed MPRF's plans to work together with other Madhesi groups to form a united front to promote an autonomous Madhes.

#### Security in Shambles

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13. (SBU) Ramsharan Chimoriya, the Chief District Officer in Janakpur, the district capital, claimed to Embodys December 4 that the open border between Nepal's Terai and India allowed Indian criminals to pass freely into Nepal where they were immune from Indian law. He noted that the situation in the district capital was fairly calm, but added that small extremist groups such as the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha ("People's Terai Liberation Front") (JTMM) were involved in atrocities in rural areas. Bhog Bahadur Thapa, District Superintendent of Police, told Embodys that the Home Ministry had reestablished all of the district's 916 police posts after the Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed in November 2006. Thapa mentioned that there were approximately 1000 civil police and 400 Armed Police Force in the district for

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the maintenance of law and order. He freely admitted, however, that political interference and the lack of resources, equipment and weapons ("We have 303s -- rifles; the criminals have SLRs -- machine guns), made it very difficult for the police to do their work. He added that the Home Ministry had succeeded in reinstating only 50 percent of the police posts in the adjoining district of Siraha due to the violent activities carried out by JTMM and other criminal groups.

#### Poor Security Impedes Development

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14. (SBU) Mitharam Humagain, Planning Officer at the District Development Committee (DDC) office, stated December 5 that Danusha had plenty of money from the central government for development work. The DDC had an annual allocation of one million rupees (Note: approximately USD 16,000) per Village Development Committee (VDC), which was used mostly for maintaining and constructing roads, bridges and infrastructure of the school buildings. In addition, the Food and Agriculture Organization was funding a "food for work program" in the district which was used to construct roads. The roads in the rural areas were in dilapidated condition due to flood and rain, and were in need of repair. Despite the adequate funds, poor security in the Terai had prevented the completion of many of these projects. Several VDC Secretaries told Embodys that they were not in a position to engage in development activities -- a core function -- because extremist and criminal groups were threatening and demanding enormous sums from them. In fact, 100 of the 101 VDC secretaries in the district were conducting their work from the district headquarters, due to the unchecked extortion and abduction. Local human rights leaders echoed the reports of lawlessness in the district.

15. (SBU) Although Danusha is far from the worst of the Terai districts in terms of law and order, it is striking that only one VDC Secretary out of 101 feels safe enough to remain at his post. Embodys heard that this level of insecurity is a recent phenomenon -- the situation is deteriorated sharply in the past few months. VDCs which were staffed throughout the Maoist insurgency are now vacant. The depth of Madhesi dissatisfaction with the central government, even among the district's mainstream political leaders, was also immediately evident. It is little wonder that former NC Minister Thakur's new grouping and his effort to unify Madhesi political forces have reportedly been widely welcomed in the Terai.